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President of UM Staff Senate endorses governor's pay proposal

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IMMEDIATELY

PRESIDENT OF UM STAFF SENATE
ENDORSES GOVERNOR'S PAY PROPOSAL

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MISSOULA--

The president of the University of Montana Staff Senate, a group of 16 senators representing about 650 nonacademic employees at UM, said she hopes the 1975 State Legislature gives adequate consideration to implementing and funding the Statewide Wage and Salary Plan proposed by Gov. Thomas L. Judge.

In an interview at the University, Joyce D. Zacek (pronounced Zaacheck) said the implementation and funding of the wage and salary plan under the statewide classification system "would ensure equal pay for equal work for state employees included in the classification plan."

"I believe the nonacademic employees at the University deserve at least equal consideration when salary boosts are being considered for others employed by the state," Mrs. Zacek said.

Commenting on the relatively low pay received by some staff members at the University, Mrs. Zacek said, "The UM Staff Senate conducted a study recently which shows that the nonacademic staff members at the University have a lower range of pay in eight of 15 common positions, when compared with employees of the Department of Institutions. Also, in comparing UM staff salaries with salaries of other employees in the Missoula area, the University staff had lower salaries in 10 of 19 common positions."

A December 1974 study of staff salaries at the University shows that, of the 642 full-time-equivalent nonacademic employees (excluding students and faculty), 308, or 48.1 percent, had take-home salaries of between \$70 and \$100 per week, Mrs. Zacek said. The low-salaried employees included clerks, cooks, secretaries, custodians and library assistants.

"The turnover in 1974 for the same group of 308 members of the University's nonacademic staff was about 175, or 56.7 percent," Mrs. Zacek said. "There is no doubt that one of the major reasons for the high turnover of nonacademic employees at UM is the low salaries that many of the staff members are paid."

Emphasizing the need for salary boosts for nonacademic employees, Mrs. Zacek said, "There has been a lot of dissatisfaction among our staff members because they feel not enough consideration is given to their salary levels. The University staff tends to be overlooked when salaries are discussed.

"In spite of small raises annually since 1970-71, most UM nonacademic employees actually receive lower salaries in 1975, in terms of actual buying power, than they did four years ago," Zacek said. "Only the two lowest employment categories have kept pace with inflation."

She said a nonacademic employee at UM who had a salary of \$5,000 in 1970-71, and who currently earns \$6,327 per year, actually is at a salary level now of \$4,867 in constant dollars, a 2.6 percent decline compared with four years ago.

"Also, a UM employee at the \$15,000 salary level in 1970-71, and who is paid \$17,348 now, has a true salary today of \$13,345 in constant dollars, a decrease of 11 percent," Mrs. Zacek said.

Mrs. Zacek is editor of the Montana Business Quarterly for the UM Bureau of Business and Economic Research.